

initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated negotiations engine further recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the indicated terminal, the automated negotiations engine indicating any changes in the terms until a set of terms is acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity.

*21*  
2. The apparatus of Claim *1*, wherein the item to be developed comprises a product.

*21*  
3. The apparatus of Claim *1*, wherein the item to be developed comprises a service.

*21*  
4. The apparatus of Claim *1*, wherein the dynamic contracts manager further comprises a viewer for displaying aspects of the item as the item's development is being negotiated and performed.

*51*  
5. The apparatus of Claim *1*, wherein the dynamic contracts manager further comprises a multimedia transmittal function for transmitting an item capable of being transmitted in electronic form as the item's development is being negotiated and performed.

6. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the dynamic contracts manager further comprises an active template for supplying some of the initial terms.

7. The apparatus of Claim 6, wherein the active template further comprises predefined formats for designated terms.

8. The apparatus of Claim 7, wherein the predefined formats further comprise functions for activating computer programs.

9. The apparatus of Claim 8 wherein the computer programs further comprise computer programs for importing and exporting data.

10. The apparatus of Claim 8, wherein the computer programs further comprise programming tools for generating application programs.

11. The apparatus of Claim 8, wherein the computer programs further comprise programming tools for automating product design and development.

12. The apparatus of Claim 8, wherein the computer programs further comprise computer programs for tracking and analyzing costs and performance data.

13. The apparatus of Claim 7, wherein the predefined formats further comprise documentation formats to be used during negotiation and development.

~~14~~ ~~15~~ 14. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the dynamic contracts manager further comprises an access control system for limiting the number of users allowed to participate in the negotiation of the terms specifying the item to be developed.

~~15~~ ~~16~~ 15. A method for conducting iterative development negotiations, comprising the steps of:

supplying, through a dynamic contracts manager, an initial set of terms for use by a user, the terms specifying an item to be developed; and  
operating a multivariate negotiations system including storage space and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being responsive to an initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the

multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated negotiations engine further recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the indicated terminal, the automated negotiations engine indicating any changes in the terms until a set of terms is acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity.

*Rule 16*  
16. The method of Claim ~~15~~<sup>16</sup>, wherein the step of specifying an item to be developed further comprises the step of specifying a product.

*Rule 17*  
17. The method of Claim ~~15~~<sup>16</sup>, wherein the step of specifying an item to be developed further comprises the step of specifying a service.

*Rule 18*  
18. The method of Claim ~~15~~<sup>16</sup>, wherein the step of supplying terms further comprises the step of displaying, through use of a viewer, aspects of the item as the item's development is being negotiated and performed.

*Rule 19*  
19. The method of Claim ~~15~~<sup>16</sup>, wherein step of supplying terms further comprises the step of transmitting an item capable of being transmitted in electronic form, using a

multimedia transmittal mechanism, as the item's development is being negotiated and performed.

~~20~~ <sup>10/18</sup>  
20. The method of Claim ~~15~~, wherein the step of supplying terms further comprises the step of using an active template for supplying some of the initial terms.

~~21~~ <sup>of 20</sup>  
21. The method of Claim ~~20~~, wherein the step of using an active template further comprises the step of using predefined formats for designated terms.

~~22~~ <sup>22/21</sup>  
~~22~~. The method of Claim ~~21~~, wherein the step of using predefined formats further comprises the step of activating computer programs through functions in the <sup>Com</sup> predefined formats.

~~23~~ <sup>22/22</sup>  
23. The method of Claim ~~22~~, wherein the step of activating computer programs further comprises the step of activating computer programs for importing and exporting data.

~~24~~ <sup>22/22</sup>  
~~24~~. The method of Claim ~~22~~, wherein the step of activating computer programs further comprises the step of activating computer programs for generating application programs.

~~25~~ <sup>22/22</sup>  
25. The method of Claim ~~22~~, wherein the step of activating computer programs further comprises the step of activating programming tools for automating product design and development.

~~26~~ 26. The method of Claim ~~22~~ 22, wherein the step of activating computer programs further comprises the step of activating computer programs for tracking and analyzing costs and performance data.

~~26~~ 26. ~~26~~ 27. The method of Claim ~~21~~ 21, wherein the step of using predefined formats further comprises the step of specifying documentation formats to be used during negotiation and development.

*Cont* ~~26~~ 28. ~~15~~ 15. The method of Claim ~~15~~ 15, wherein the step of supplying terms further comprises the step of for limiting, through use of an access control system, the number of users allowed to participate in the negotiation of the terms specifying the item to be developed.

Date: July 9, 2001

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